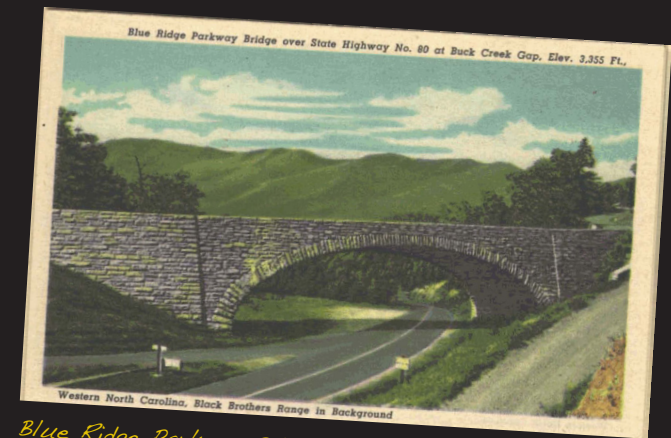


BRINGING THE BEST OF THE BLUE RIDGE TO MILLIONS FOR 75 YEARS!



Blue Ridge Parkway Bridge over State Hwy. 80 at Buck Creek Gap

Each year, Parkway travel generates more than two billion dollars to the economies of North Carolina and Virginia through tourism-related activities. Many Parkway communities are planning 75th anniversary events this year, showcasing their rich mountain culture.

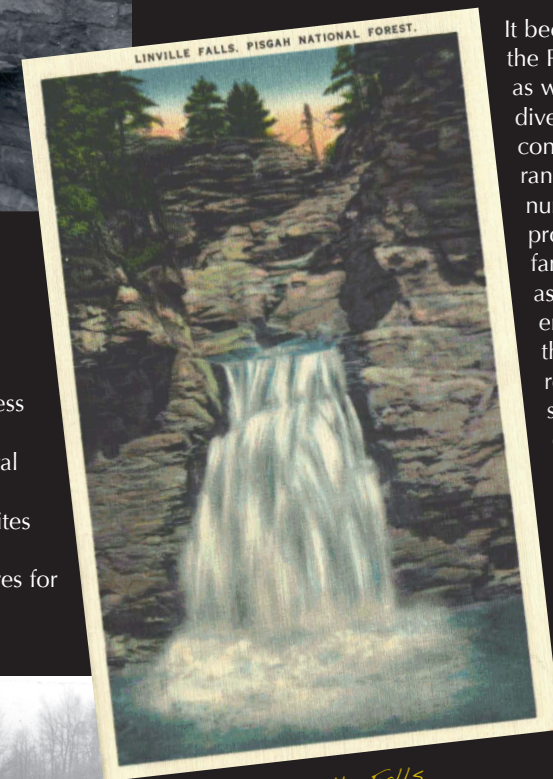


Spanish and Italian stone masons were employed to complete much of the extraordinary rock work along the Parkway.

The Parkway touches boundaries with state parks, four national forests, and five federally designated wilderness areas. Where else in our fast-paced world can people follow one path that reveals so much natural and cultural history? It's hard to forget a visit to this special place. Browsing through today's electronic social media websites confirms this as visitors record their thoughts and ideas about the Parkway as well as sharing their digital pictures for the entire world to enjoy.



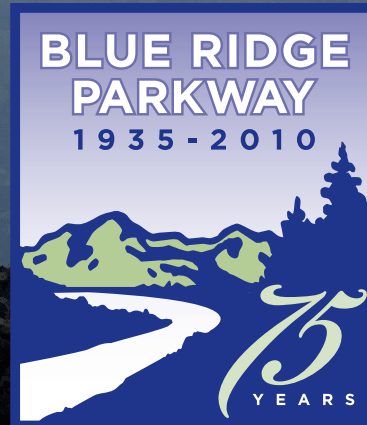
Rail fencing became part of the visual appeal of the agricultural lands adjacent to many sections of the Parkway.



*Linville Falls
Pisgah National Forest*

in order to enhance the visual scene and recreational opportunities.

The Parkway serves as 'the high road' -- a platform to climb up on and look off of, far beyond the official boundaries. To remain America's Favorite Drive for the next 75 years requires the combined efforts of park staff, park visitors and park neighbors. How can you help? Check out the Issues on pages 13 through 16. Get involved with a Parkway Partner group — see page 18 for more information. And of course, we hope you will visit and enjoy the many special events both on and off the Parkway as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary!



Celebrating 75 YEARS

A visit to the Blue Ridge Parkway should be slow-paced and relaxing – pretty consistent with the general rhythm of life here in the mountains. This is never a place to be in a hurry! Residents of the communities along the Parkway during the early days of construction simply called it “the Scenic.” Early designers used more poetic language, describing the road design as if they were painting the landscape “with the brush of a comet’s tail.” Both descriptions ring true. As we celebrate the Parkway’s 75th anniversary this year we reflect on the meaning and importance of this special place to its millions of visitors, and to those who live in adjacent communities. The Parkway began as a concept in the minds of Depression-era politicians who envisioned jobs for many of the nation’s unemployed. It would also be a tremendous economic boost to the region, linking two national parks, Virginia’s Shenandoah and the Great Smokies of NC and TN.

Construction began in September 1935 at Cumberland Knob, near the NC/VA state line. Survey parties led the way far into the mountains and soon realized the size of the task at hand. Foremost in the minds of construction crews was creating as little

scar as possible on mountain slopes. The Parkway was to “lay easy on the land” and, in order for that to be accomplished, great care was taken to blend the new roadway into its natural surroundings.

Progress was steady until the early 1940s when work was slowed by the coming of WWII. After the war, construction resumed through the late 1950s and early 1960s. Finally, the only “missing link” was a section around Grandfather Mountain, NC. In order to preserve the fragile environment on the steep slopes of Grandfather, a unique design was conceived – the Linn Cove Viaduct – and the Parkway was completed in 1987.

We’re reminded during this anniversary year that the Parkway is a national treasure, enjoyed by more than 850 million visitors since we started counting in 1939. Annually, it is the most visited unit of America’s National Park System. It is also an economic force for regional tourism. Finally, we are increasingly aware that this treasured place is a fragile resource. Our challenge for the next 75 years and beyond is to continue successfully preserving the historic structures, the varied ecosystems along with the plants and animals they contain, and the magnificent Parkway views themselves.

PARKWAY MILEPOST

General Driving Safety

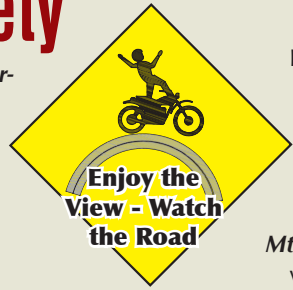
Because of its unique design, the Parkway drive is different than most and this can mean taking some extra care to ensure a safe visit. "Enjoy the view, but watch the road!" is our way of reminding visitors to pay extra attention along the Parkway. A few specific pointers and facts may help even more.

Watch out for...

- STEEP GRADES** – In some places, the Parkway has steeper grades than normally found on highways. Without paying close attention, your speed can increase far more than you expect.
- UNFORGIVING ROAD SHOULDERS** – The Parkway’s road shoulders are narrow in places so that the meadows or forest edges grow close to the pavement. This is, of course, part of the beauty of the drive, but may require some extra attention.
- BUILT-IN DISTRACTIONS** – Wildlife, wildflowers, bicyclists, and extraordinary views... all of these contribute to the Parkway experience and every traveler should be aware of these while enjoying the drive.
- LIMITED SIGHT DISTANCES** – There aren’t many straight lines in the natural world and the Parkway was designed with gentle curves and not many straight sections. This is part of what makes the road seem to lie gently on the land and it also requires some extra attention while driving.
- SPEED CHANGES** – The Parkway speed limit is mostly 45 mph, but occasionally you will find yourself in developed areas where the driving speed drops to 25 mph.
- SPIRAL CURVES** - Some of the tight curves do not have a consistent radius so that extra care needs to be taken, especially on motorcycles.

Other Important Safety Advice

- Hiking shoes or boots are recommended for most trails, especially the more strenuous ones. Steep and rocky areas and slippery stream crossings require extra attention and careful footing. Even for trails marked “easy,” it is advisable to wear flat or rubber-soled shoes for comfort and good traction. Wearing sandals, “flip-flops,” or high heels can result in accidents.
- Lock valuables in the trunk of your car or take them with you.
- Sudden changes in weather are common in these mountains. Even in mild seasons, rapid dips in temperature and unexpected thunderstorms frequently occur, and at higher elevations the wind and temperature can carry a surprising chill. Be prepared for weather changes by bringing along suitable clothing.
- Do not drink the water from streams or springs.



Lodging & Dining

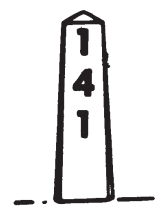
Lodges are located on the Parkway at Peaks of Otter (MP 86) , Doughton Park (MP 241.1), and Mt. Pisgah (MP 408), with housekeeping cabins available at Rocky Knob (MP 175).



Restaurants, other facilities and services are available at a number of other locations, opening in mid- or late April. See chart on page 7 for details.

Special Information: MILEPOSTS:

Along the Parkway, you will see numbered mileposts. The zero milepost marker is at Rockfish Gap immediately south of Shenandoah National Park. Each mile is numbered progressively southward on the Parkway to its southernmost entrance at Cherokee.



Our Symbol

The National Park Service arrowhead was authorized as the agency’s official emblem by the Secretary of the Interior on July 20, 1951. Created in 1949 by Aubrey V. Neasham, a Park Service historian, the insignia was intended to represent several aspects of the mission of the National Park Service: Its shape and earth-brown background embody our nation’s cultural heritage exemplified in the parks by archaeology and history. The bison and the sequoia tree (symbols from the first two national parks--Yellowstone and Sequoia) represent the diverse natural world of plants and animals included within the system. The snowcapped mountain and glacier portrayed on the insignia’s horizon and the white of the water in its right foreground signify the all-important values of scenery and recreation. The symbol first appeared on a park road sign, then a ranger uniform in September 1952. The icon was registered as an official emblem of the Park Service on February 9, 1965, by the United States Patent Office.



Regulations By Recreational Activity

To help protect and preserve the Blue Ridge Parkway, yourself, and others, observe all park regulations. Be alert for uncontrolled fire, safety hazards, accidents and emergencies. Please report such conditions by calling 1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928).

- ROADSIDE PARKING** - Parking is allowed on road shoulders, but please avoid wet areas and make sure that all four wheels are off the pavement.
- TRAILS** - Trails are for hiking only. Bicycles and motorized vehicles are not permitted.
- CAMPING** - Camping is permitted only in park campgrounds or designated back-country sites. See Camping information, page 8.
- PETS** - All pets must be on a leash or under physical restraint at all times while in the park. The territorial instinct of dogs can lead to fights with other dogs on the trail. Dogs also frighten hikers and chase wildlife. If a pet cannot be kept under control, it should be left at home.
- LAKES AND PONDS** - These are for fishing and scenic beauty only, with no swimming allowed. Nearby U.S. Forest Service recreation areas, state parks, and mountain resorts often have swimming facilities.
- PREVENT FOREST FIRES** - Fires are permitted in the provided grills or fire pits in campgrounds and picnic areas only.
- BOATS** – Only on Price Lake, boats without motors or sails are permitted.
- LITTER** - Deposit all litter in the trash cans provided.
- ALL NATURAL RESOURCES ARE PROTECTED** - Leave wildflowers and other vegetation in their natural condition for others to enjoy. Do not disturb animal or plant life in any way. Hunting and trapping are prohibited. Do not interfere with animals by feeding, touching, or frightening them. Do not cut, deface, or damage trees.
- ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** - Possession of open containers of alcohol in vehicles is prohibited. Alcohol is permitted in campgrounds by registered campers and in picnic areas until 9:00 PM.

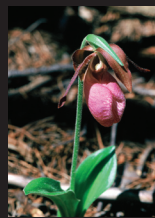
Accessibility:

Most Parkway facilities are wheelchair usable. Some facilities have minor slope and/or structural barriers. For more information about access, please contact The Blue Ridge Parkway Headquarters, 199 Hemphill Knob Road, Asheville, NC 28803. Phone: (828) 271-4779.

Places to Pause along the Parkway...

	Milepost	Visitor Center	Camping	Exhibits	Programs	Restrooms	Picnic Areas
Humpback Rocks	5.8	H		H	HP	H	X
Otter Creek**	60.9		H		H	HP	
James River	63.8	HP		H		HP	X
Peaks of Otter*	86	H	H	H	H	H	HP
Explore Park VC	115	H		H		H	
Roanoke Mountain	120.4		H		H	HP	
Smart View	154.5					HP	H
Rocky Knob^	169	H	H		HP	HP	H
Mabry Mill **	176.1			HP	HP	HP	
Groundhog Mountain	189					HP	H
Blue Ridge Music Cntr	213	H		H	H	H	
Cumberland Knob	217.5					H	H
Doughton Park*	241.1		H	HP	HP	HP	HP
NW Trading Post	258.6					H	
Jeffress Park	272					HP	H
Cone Park	294.1	H		H	H	H	
Price Park	297.1		H		H	HP	H
Linn Cove Viaduct	304.4	H		H		H	
Linville Falls	316.4	H	H	H	X	H	H
Minerals Museum	331	H		H	H	H	
Crabtree Falls **	339.5		H		HP	H	H
Craggy Gardens	364.6	H		H		HPA	H
Folk Art Center	382	H		H	H	H	H
Parkway Visitor Ctr.	384	H		H	H	H	H
Mt Pisgah*	408.6		H		HP	H	HP
Waterrock Knob	451.2	H		H	H	H	

H – Wheelchair Accessible. HP – Accessible with Assistance. X – Not Handicapped Accessible. HPA – Located in Picnic Area. *- Lodging and Dining Available. ** Dining Available. ^ Lodging Available.



Camping

Of the Parkway's nine campgrounds, most have at least some sites that will accommodate sizeable recreational vehicles, and all offer restrooms, drinking water, picnic tables and grills. The settings are tranquil and scenic, and most offer ready access to miles of hiking trails for those who want to explore on foot. **Be sure to ask about Ranger talks and campfire programs that are given most weekends and occasionally during the week.** Most campgrounds are at elevations of more than 2,500 feet, which means that temperatures are usually cooler than in the surrounding area. Even in summer a sweater can come in handy.

Campgrounds are open early May through October, with a per night charge of \$16. Reservations may be made for some sites at the Peaks of Otter, Rocky Knob, Doughton Park, Price Park, Linville Falls and Mt. Pisgah campgrounds. All other campgrounds and sites are "first come, first served." To make a reservation, visit www.recreation.gov on the Internet or call toll-free (877) 444-6777. Reserved sites are \$19 per night. As a general rule, demand is higher on weekends and holidays.

Group camping is available only at **Linville Falls Campground**. Call (828) 765-6082 for more information. In addition, limited backcountry camping is available via permit at **Basin Cove in Doughton Park** (336-372-8568) and **Rock Castle Gorge** (540-745-9661).

Camping outside of designated campgrounds or without a permit at backcountry sites is prohibited.



Fishing

The Parkway lies along the headwaters of many regional watersheds. Thirteen lakes were constructed for aesthetic beauty and recreational opportunities. Streams, ponds, and rivers give anglers ample opportunity to test their skills for trout, bass, and panfish. A state license from either North Carolina or Virginia is valid for fishing in all park waters. Creel limits and other regulations vary and are posted at streamside. Remember that swimming is not allowed in park waters.



Bicycling

In North Carolina, helmets are required for all bicyclists under sixteen years of age. In Virginia, the regulations vary by county. Helmets are a highly recommended safety item when bicycling the Blue Ridge Parkway. High visibility clothing is recommended. Be sure to ride single file, well to the right-hand side of the road and obey the same traffic rules that apply to motor vehicles. Bicycles are not permitted on trails or walkways. Plan ahead, and be sure to take into consideration elevation changes that will require more time and, of course, more exertion.

Be A Good Guest In Bear Country!

Seeing bears can be the highlight of any visit to a national park. However, while visitors to the Parkway come and go, bears and other wildlife live here. Your actions can have a lasting impact on the behavior and health of these magnificent animals. Bears quickly lose their natural fear of people if fed human food, so do not feed them, crowd them or observe them too closely. Store all food, coolers, utensils or anything that may smell like food in locked vehicles. Place litter in garbage cans as soon as possible.

Restrooms

Restrooms are available at visitor centers, picnic areas and restaurants along the Parkway.

Ranger-led Programs



Rangers and park volunteers share their knowledge of the Parkway by presenting a variety of interpretive programs from June through October. Campfire talks, guided hikes, historic craft demonstrations, music,

and nature study are some of the activities you and your family can enjoy. The subject matter varies from one place to another and also may change from week to week. Schedules are posted at visitor centers, campgrounds, restaurants, and lodges and at www.nps.gov/blri.

Junior Ranger Programs

A Junior Ranger is someone like you who cares for and learns about America's national parks so that others in the future may enjoy them! Ask for a handbook at any visitor center and begin your journey to becoming a Parkway Junior Ranger. Any child can complete activities in the handbook, learn more about this National Park, what makes it special, and earn their own certificate and a Junior Ranger badge. Begin today!



Parks As Classrooms

Blue Ridge Parkway staff offers programs for students in their classrooms during the school year. The aim is to connect students with the natural world and the region's cultural heritage in ways that are real and meaningful, while meeting state curriculum standards.

In the spring and fall, Rangers offer programs at many locations along the Parkway. Teachers should contact the closest Parkway office from the list provided in the **"FOR TEACHERS"** section of www.nps.gov/blri as soon as possible to schedule field trips. Keep in mind that space is limited and programs are filled on a first come, first served basis. We know that our best hope for the future lies in educating today's children!



PARKWATCH: 1-800-PARKWATCH (727-5928)

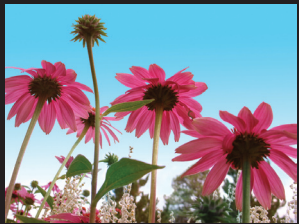
The Parkwatch program encourages visitors and park neighbors to actively protect and preserve this special place. Please be alert and report any uncontrolled fires, emergencies, accidents, safety hazards, vandalism, or crime to a park employee. For general Parkway information, call (828) 298 0398.



"MAKING A DIFFERENCE" A RESPONSIBLE VISIT

- The best diet for all animals is a natural one. Human food can make any wild animal sick. The digestive system of a white tail deer, common around campgrounds and picnic areas, only breaks down the natural food sources including twigs, bark, leaves, grasses and acorns. Wild animals like the taste of human food, but for their safety and health, do not feed them.
- The Parkway has unique habitats that support rare and endangered plants and animals. Many of these plants are threatened by foot traffic. The problem can be alleviated by the simple practice of staying on the trail. There are several especially sensitive areas, including the Tanawha Trail around Grandfather Mountain, the Craggy Pinnacle Trail at Craggy Gardens, and at Devil's Courthouse. Whether you suspect the presence of rare plants or not, please stay on the trail – if for no other reason than to protect all plants and to prevent erosion.
- Rabies can be transmitted by most wild animals. Animals in the park should not be treated as pets or lured close enough to feed or touch. If a squirrel, chipmunk, or other animal comes close without your encouragement, it could be a sign of serious illness, please tell a ranger.
- All plants on the Parkway are protected. Many of our native wildflowers in the Blue Ridge are threatened by illegal harvesting. The large, round, shiny evergreen leaves of Galax have been gathered commercially in the southern Appalachian mountains for generations for decorative uses in floral arrangements. Now harvested on a much larger scale, they are being shipped to flower shops around the world.





Highlights of Spring & Summer Wildflowers

Diversity is a hallmark of the Parkway. One reason for the variation is the change in altitude. The Parkway ranges from 650 feet above sea level at Virginia’s James River, to over 6,000 feet south of Asheville in the rugged Pisgah range.

This means that a trip along the Parkway in search of spring wildflowers is ever-changing. If you miss the early blooms at lower elevations, rest assured that you will get more opportunities in the higher ranges where the blooming is a bit later.

A variety of wildflowers decorate the Blue Ridge most of the year, beginning in late February or early March as spring beauty, a variety of violets, and May apple come into view. Buttercups and bloodroot are common along the roadsides in April. Without a doubt, May is the best overall month as trillium, fire pink, and Bowman’s root cover the ground under the purple and white blossoms of redbud and dogwood.

Rhododendron, mountain laurel, and a variety of azaleas put on their big show from May through late June. Catawba rhododendron is the purple variety that blooms from early June around the Peaks of Otter in Virginia to the third week of June at Craggy Gardens in North Carolina. Rosebay rhododendron is the larger white variety that begins in mid to late June and blooms into July. Flame azalea, pink azalea or pinxter flower bloom early to late May in many Parkway areas. Mountain laurel blooms mid to late May and into June in higher elevations.

Don’t think for a minute that wildflower season is over when the calendar turns to summer because you won’t want to miss the fields of black-eyed Susan, Ox eye daisy, tall coneflower, and coreopsis that blanket fields from late summer into autumn.

Want to know more?
For a complete list of blooms, log onto:
<http://www.nps.gov/blri/planyourvisit/brochures.htm>

OTHER COMMON FLOWERS

- Birdfoot Violet** - (*Viola pedata*) 4-10 inches tall, bluish-purple flower. March — June
- Columbine** - (*Aquilegia canadensis*) about 2 feet tall, nodding red and yellow flower. June — July
- Sun Drops** - (*Oenothera fruticosa*) 1-2 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
- Evening Primrose** - (*Oenothera biennis*) 3-5 feet tall, yellow 4-petal flower. June — July
- Phlox** - (*Phlox* species) 2-6 feet tall, magenta-pink flowers. July — October
- Touch-me-not** - (*Impatiens* species) 3-6 feet tall, nodding yellow or orange flower. July — August
- Tall Bellflower** - (*Campanula americana*) 2-6 feet tall, blue, 5-petal flower. July — August
- White Snakeroot**- (*Eupatorium rugosum*) 3-5 feet tall, bright white flower heads. July — Sept

Showy Blooms

A Quick Guide to some flowers & shrubs on the Parkway

Shrubs



Catawba Rhododendron
(*Rhododendron catawbiense*): A medium shrub with pink to purple flowers growing above 3000 feet on exposed ridges. **June — Early July**



Rosebay Rhododendron
(*Rhododendron maximum*): also called White Rhododendron: A large shrub with white to pink flowers, over a wide range of elevations. **June — July**



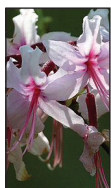
Flame Azalea
(*Rhododendron calendulaceum*): A medium shrub with bright orange to red flowers. Azaleas are in the rhododendron family. **June — July**



Wild Hydrangea
(*Hydrangea arborescens*): A medium shrub with large clusters of white flowers. **May — August**



Mountain Laurel
(*Kalmia latifolia*): A medium shrub with pink flowers. **June — July**



Pinxter Flower
(*Rhododendron nudiflorum*): A medium shrub with pink honeysuckle-like flowers, common at lower elevations. **April — May**

Flowers



Fire Pink
(*Silene virginica*): This 6-20 inch plant has bright red flowers up to 1-1/2 inches wide. **April — June**



Goat's Beard
(*Aruncus dioicus*): 3-5 feet tall with flower plumes 3-5 inches wide and 6-10 inches long. **May — June**



Bluets
(*Houstonia* species): 3-6 inches tall with many small 4-petal flowers, light to dark blue. Bluets sometimes grow in large beds. **May-August**



Turks-Cap Lily
(*Lilium superbum*): 6 to 10 feet tall with flowers 2-4 inches wide with a green star at center. The Carolina Lily (*L. michauxii*) is similar but lacks the green star and bears fewer flowers. **July-August**



Large-Flowered Trillium
(*Trillium grandiflorum*): The largest of several trilliums found along the parkway, grows to about 15 inches. Trilliums have 3 leaves and a single 3-petal flower. **April — May**



Bee Balm
(*Monarda didyma*), also called Oswego Tea: 2-5 feet tall with bright red 2-inch flowers. Wild Bergamot is similar but pink. **July — August**

- Dense Blazing Star** - (*Liatris spicata*) 2-4 feet tall, rose-purple flowered spike. **August — Sept**
- Goldenrod** - (*Solidago* species) about 3 feet tall, golden-yellow spikes or plumes. **August — Sept**
- Ox Eye Daisy** - (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) 1-3 feet tall; white petals, yellow center.
- Black-Eyed Susan** - (*Rudbeckia hirta*) 3-6 feet tall, yellow petals, black center.
- Tall Coneflower** - (*Rudbeckia laciniata*) 2-3 feet tall, drooping yellow petals, green center.
- Coreopsis** - (*Coreopsis major*) 2-3 feet tall, golden-yellow petals, green center.
- Jerusalem Artichoke** - (*Helianthus tuberosus*) 5-10 feet tall, yellow petals, yellow center.
- Aster** - (*Aster* species) 2-5 feet tall; many small flowers; blue, purple, or white petals.

THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

CORRIDOR OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

PARKWAY CULTURE...

More Than Cabins

As you drive along the Parkway reveals the cultural heritage of our region, but it takes some thought in order to get the full picture. It is easy to imagine an isolated cabin nestled in a low meadow or perched on the edge of a steep escarpment as representative of mountain life “back then.” In doing so, however, many visitors may fail to take into account the overall picture of Blue Ridge life represented along the entire Parkway.



The Parkway represents a “slice” of America, and each cabin or historic site is a snapshot of one time and one place.

Cultural sites here represent about one hundred years – the early decades of the nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century. Those who planned the Parkway and its scenic views thought that the most picturesque and quaint remnants of the past were the log cabins. In a few places, the early designers removed larger houses and replaced them with smaller rough hewn cabins, complete with reflecting ponds. Although cabins were certainly here in the early days of mountain settlement, many were covered with siding and whitewashed before too many years.

It is also important to remember that there were more homes here in the past than we see today. At places like Rockcastle Gorge, Basin Cove, and the Peaks of Otter, communities of dozens of families lived and worked. Some lived in log houses, others in framed farm houses. In some cases, natural disasters such as the 1916 flood or the Chestnut blight devastated entire mountain communities.

As you visit the Parkway during this anniversary year, the historic sites that capture your attention reveal many broad themes of Blue Ridge history. We hope you find stories that challenge you to think about the unique Appalachian culture, defined by arts, crafts, and music that persists in the region. The Cherokee culture that has populated the region and defined much of Appalachian history for thousands of years is preserved on the southern end of the Parkway and reflected in place names throughout the region. According to some scholars, the herbal lore, basketry, and even some forms of dancing, so much a part of “traditional” Appalachian culture, have roots in the exchange of culture when Europeans and Native Americans met on the Appalachian frontier.

Perhaps the most important piece of advice is to slow down, listen, and take all of the stories you hear as part of the bigger Blue Ridge story. Together, these are stories that tell us of the richness and wealth of this ancient slice of America.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of the most graceful mountain highways ever designed and built, but it is also a road that links communities and their individual stories and unique environments into a corridor of natural and cultural heritage.

THE BLACK BEAR

A Blue Ridge Success Story

The natural history of the Blue Ridge is filled with intriguing stories of habitat, migration, varied ecosystems, stories of loss and stories of success. During this anniversary year, as you visit Parkway sites and adjacent communities, these natural history stories are your avenue for a deeper understanding of the mountains.

For many visitors, a Parkway trip is not complete without a glimpse of the largest mammal still found here, the Black bear (*Ursus americanus*). In both Virginia and North Carolina, bear populations are healthy and on the rise – a great natural history success story. While some of the region’s other mammals have declined in population or disappeared entirely over the centuries, bears have tenaciously held on to their Blue Ridge habitat, being comfortable in the rockiest and steepest terrain as well as being adaptable and opportunistic, especially when it comes to eating.

The Black bear’s preferred menu is impressive and ranges from grasses, roots and berries to insects and grubs. They also eat fish and small animals, including frogs, salamanders, and field mice. Many early spring plants and herbs become their main diet while yellow jacket nests, termites, honey and wild cherries carry them through the summer months. Fattening up for the winter means that foraging on the fall nut crop may literally be a matter of survival.

Black bears do not truly hibernate, but sleep deeply throughout much of the winter, occasionally venturing out or stirring within the den. The sows give birth during the winter and by spring, the cubs are ready to explore the world for the first time. Their survival depends on the skill of the mother who teaches them what to eat, how to forage, and how to recognize and avoid danger.

Notice the Parkway place names such as Beartrap Gap (Milepost 428.5), Bear Pen Gap (Milepost 427.6), Beartrail Ridge (Milepost 430.4), Bear Den Overlook (Milepost 323.0), and two places named Bear Wallow Gap (Milepost 91 and 335). These remind us of the bear legacy among mountain residents.

Although management of the natural resources of the Blue Ridge has its share of disappointments, the rise of the Black Bear population is one of the exciting Parkway success stories.





Appalachian Trail, VA

The Appalachian Trail parallels the first 100 miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway to a point just north of Roanoke VA. There are many trail access points along this section of the Parkway. For more information, please refer to Appalachian Trail publications. www.nps.gov/appa



Mount Mitchell State Park, NC

Mount Mitchell is the highest point in eastern North America, rising to 6,684 feet. A Mount Mitchell State Park map with trail information is available at the state park headquarters, two miles up NC State Highway 128 from the park entrance at Milepost 355.4. Write to Mount Mitchell State Park, 2388 State Hwy 128, Burnsville, NC 28714 or call (828) 675 4611. www.ncparks.gov

Popular Hiking Trails of the Blue Ridge Parkway

Hiking maps are available at Visitor Center closest to the trail or can be downloaded at www.nps.gov/blri

Virginia Trails

Milepost	Trail - Miles - Difficulty
5.9	Farm Museum Trail 0.25 easy *
34.4	Yankee Horse (logging RR) 0.2 moderate
60.8	Otter Creek 3.5 moderate *
63.1	Otter Lake Loop 0.8 moderate *
63.6	James River (canal locks) 0.2 easy *
63.6	Trail of Trees Loop 0.5 moderate *
78.4	Apple Orchard Falls 1.2 strenuous **
83.1	Fallingwater Cascades 1.6 moderate **
83.5	Flat Top 4.4 strenuous *
85.7	Abbott Lake Loop 1.0 easy *
85.9	Elk Run Loop 0.8 easy *
85.9	Johnson Farm Loop 2.1 moderate *
85.9	Harkening Hill 3.3 moderate *
86.0	Sharp Top 1.6 strenuous *
110.6	Stewart Knob 1.2 moderate *
114.9	Roanoke River Loop 0.35 easy *
120.4	Roanoke Mountain Summit 0.11 moderate *
154.5	Smart View Loop 2.6 moderate
167.1	Rock Castle Gorge Loop 10.8 strenuous *
176.2	Mabry Mill 0.5 easy
213.0	Fisher's Peak Loop 2.25 moderate *

North Carolina Trails

Milepost	Trail - Miles - Difficulty
217.5	Cumberland Knob 0.5 easy *
230.1	Little Glade Millpond Loop 0.4 easy
241.0	Fodder Stack 1.0 moderate *
271.9	Cascades Loop 0.5 moderate
294.0	Flat Top Mountain 3.0 moderate *
294.1	Figure 8 Loop 0.7 easy *
296.5	Boone Fork Loop 5.5 moderate-strenuous *
297.0	Price Lake Loop 2.7 moderate *
304.4	Linn Cove Viaduct Access 0.16 easy *
305.2	Beacon Heights 0.2 moderate *
305.5	Tanawha (MP 297 - 305) 13.5 moderate-strenuous * D
316.4	Linville Falls, Erwins View 0.8 moderate *
316.4	Linville Falls, Plunge Basin 0.5 strenuous *
339.5	Crabtree Falls 2.5 strenuous *
364.2	Craggy Pinnacle 0.7 moderate *
407.6	Mt. Pisgah Summit 1.3 moderate-strenuous *
407.6	Buck Springs (lodge to view) 1.06 easy-moderate *
408.5	Frying Pan Mountain 1.06 moderate-strenuous *
418.8	Graveyard Fields Stream Loop 2.3 moderate
431.0	Richland Balsam 1.5 moderate
451.2	Waterrock Knob Summit 0.6 moderate-strenuous

Please note:
Distances are one way except for loop trails. See trail maps for distances, features, walking conditions and important advice. * Hiking map is available. ** Designated National Recreation Trail.
D=Tanawha has nine Parkway access points, several in the Grandfather Mountain area.

EXPERIENCING THE BLUE RIDGE: on foot

In his short essay titled "Walking," Henry David Thoreau laments that he has met but a few people in his entire life who "understood the art of walking... who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering..." Perhaps it is because of our busy lifestyles and calendars crammed with activities, but who has time to "saunter?" The same can be said of many travelers to the Parkway who see the Blue Ridge only from the comfort of their vehicles. They may not be aware of the one hundred or so varied and intriguing trails providing a close up look at some of the most beautiful landscape in America. Many of these paths wind through unique biological and geological environments. Others lead to historic sites that have stories about how people

shaped the land. Visitors who see the landscape only through glass... windshields, windows of visitor centers, sunglasses, binoculars, or cameras... see it at a distance. It is on trails, however, where we get the close up views that are sometimes more memorable than the distant ones. Even on the shortest "leg stretcher" trails, we begin to fully appreciate this wonderful region. Enrich your Parkway experience by smelling the woods and watching the sunlight filter through the foliage. See the wildflowers pop up through the remaining ice and snow in the early spring and watch the bare limbs of trees turn faintly green. Check out the chart above and begin practicing the art of walking!

North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail

The Mountains to Sea Trail (MST), when complete, will extend over 930 miles from Clingman's Dome, in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, to Jockey's Ridge on the North Carolina Outer Banks. Much of the MST parallels the Blue Ridge Parkway with many trail access points along the Parkway. The Carolina Mountain Club maintains much of the trail between mileposts 355 and 455. To volunteer, contact:

Carolina Mountain Club
PO Box 68
Asheville, NC • 28802
www.carolinamtnclub.com

More than Just a Road PROTECTING PARKWAY VIEWSHEDS



N&W Overlook at Milepost 106.9.
Top View 1950, Bottom View: 2005

The Parkway's most identifiable and notable feature becomes apparent as we unfold the map. It is long and narrow! This shape affects management of the park and the visitors' experience as well. Along the majority of the Parkway, the boundary remains close at hand, and the long, sweeping views that we enjoy from the ridgetops extend all the way to the horizon. Scores of adjacent communities identify themselves with the Parkway and are joining us in celebrating the 75th anniversary this year with individual and unique celebrations.

During construction of the Parkway, local residents referred to the overlooks as "balconies" and the Parkway remains today as something of a platform or a balcony for many visitors. People enjoy climbing up high and looking out into valleys and across distant mountain ranges, and into rural landscapes and local communities.

The vistas that the Parkway is known for go far beyond the physical boundary. This notion of the horizon being the park boundary created a sense of wilderness in the designers' minds. In essence, they felt that it provided "freedom from the impression of a boundary line."

This idea, the horizon as the boundary, also creates unique challenges today, since the park was designed to take full advantage of these scenic views. Decisions made outside the park

boundary in the communities along the way affect the visitors' experience and, in a similar way, every decision made by Parkway management is done with the understanding that this can affect the neighboring communities. Through the 29 North Carolina and Virginia counties that the Parkway travels, a half million acres of scenic views lie within a two mile wide corridor. Two thirds of the 1200 mountinside and rural farm landscapes we see are owned by private landowners and the other one third are on national forest lands.

Four thousand adjacent park landowners have some reserved rights on park lands. Most have private road access and some have rights of way for utilities. Agricultural leases or scenic easements are a significant tool for managing Parkway views. Another 500 permitted utility rights of way, 450 agricultural leases, and some 21,000 acres of scenic easements are managed by the park.

Parkway visitors spend over 2 billion dollars annually in communities adjacent to the Parkway - communities that are helping us celebrate this year. A 2008 survey reveals that 97% of Parkway visitors consider the scenic views along the drive to be extremely important. Such surveys suggest a direct relationship between changing land use changes and reduced revenue in counties where the scenic quality of views is diminished.

Land use changes in the 29 counties of the Parkway are dramatically altering the scenic quality from some 1,242 Parkway roadside and overlook vistas. Limited staff allows for addressing only the most drastic land use changes on a case-by-case basis.

The Parkway may look simple on a map - a long, thin, blue line meandering down the mountains between Shenandoah and the Smokies. But keeping the magnificent views to the horizon as they were intended in the early days is a challenge that will continue in this, our anniversary year, and for years to come.

AT ISSUE

How can you help?



Contact the Western Virginia Land Trust www.westernvirginiatruck.org, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina www.ctnc.org, or Blue Ridge Forever www.blueridgeforever.info to be a part of the viewshed protection programs. These groups serve a vital mission in preserving open space in local communities as well.

The Parkway may look simple on a map - a long, thin, blue line meandering down the mountains between Shenandoah and the Smokies.

But keeping the magnificent views to the horizon as they were intended in the early days is a challenge that will continue for years to come.

More than Just a Road

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

AT ISSUE



What Can You Do?

Stay on the trail to avoid trampling fragile habitats. While tempting, don't share your lunch with the wildlife and dispose of food waste and food wrappers responsibly.

Grassy Bald at Craggy Gardens

Plant Species

1600 vascular plants
137 trees
(more than all of Europe)

Animal Species

74 mammals
115 nesting birds
40+ amphibians
35 reptiles

Many millions of visitors will enjoy the Blue Ridge Parkway during this 75th anniversary year. Some of them will think of it as just a motor road or a pleasant drive. But the Parkway is also a place of varied and significant natural resources. Spanning the southern and central Appalachians, the Blue Ridge Parkway offers an exceptional glimpse of the regional flora and fauna. It is

rare or threatened. New species continue to be found.

The Parkway's tremendous diversity is also due to its large north-south geographic range, diverse geology, a variety of micro-habitats, and varying climates. Taking advantage of this diversity are 14 major vegetation types and about 1,600 vascular plant species, 50 of which are threatened or endangered. Nearly

100 species of trees grow along the Parkway, about as many as are found in all of Europe. Added to that are estimates of almost 400 species of mosses and nearly 2,000 species of fungi.

Because of this wide range in elevation, the park visitor can enjoy a tremendous variety of wildflowers throughout the spring, summer, and fall months. While the summer wildflowers are blooming in the valleys, the spectacular spring wildflowers are just beginning to bloom on the high peaks. The same environmental variability that leads to such spectacular bloom displays in the spring and summer also contributes to autumn leaf color. The first leaves to change are those of deciduous trees on the highest elevations, which change to vivid shades of orange, red, yellow, and purple. Throughout the month of October the leaf color changes gradually, beginning in the high mountains and concluding at the lower slopes and valleys.

Not to be outdone by the plants, many species of animals make their homes along the Parkway. Seventy four different mammals, more than 40 amphibians, and 35 reptiles can be found on Parkway lands. One hundred fifteen species of birds are known to nest here with dozens of others passing through during fall and spring migrations. A Parkway visit may seem incomplete without the glimpses of white tailed deer, wild turkey, and perhaps a chance to see the elusive black bear.

It may be thought of by many as just a road, a ride-awhile and stop-awhile winding, recreational trip linking Shenandoah and the Great Smokies. Along the way, however, the Parkway opens up the southern and central Appalachian Mountains and its wealth of plants and animals. This is, without a doubt, one of the most diverse places on earth.



Chickadee

world renowned for its diversity.

The Parkway covers a wide range of habitats along the Appalachian Mountains, so that the plants growing on a mountain summit at the northern end of the park may be quite different from those on a summit at the southern end. Some of these habitats are exceptionally rare. Rock outcrops at high elevations contain a fragile group of alpine species that were pushed southward during glacial times and eventually were left stranded on the southern mountains. Grassy Balds form another unique habitat. These were likely grazed by native animals such as bison and elk, but are now maintained by park biologists.

Along this route, visitors encounter an unsurpassed diversity of climate zones, vegetation zones, physiographic zones, and geological features. Within park boundaries are 600 streams (150 headwaters), 47 Natural Heritage Areas (areas set aside as national, regional, or state examples of exemplary natural communities), a variety of slopes and exposures, and possibly 100 different soil types. With



Turk's Cap Lily

an elevation range of 5,700 feet, the Parkway provides a home for both southern species at the lower elevations and northern species on the mountaintops. Seventy five distinct plant communities have been documented, including 24 considered globally

More than Just a Road

NON-NATIVE SPECIES

AT ISSUE



How can you help?

Park visitors, especially those who live near the park, can help by planting native species in their backyards, washing their boots and car tires after trekking through areas where exotic seeds are being dispersed, and insuring that grass seeds and bulk soils purchased are weed-free. New exotics, both plants and animals, continually make their way across the United States. If you see a new non-native species, please report it and its location to park staff.

As visitors enjoy the Parkway during this 75th anniversary year, most of the plants and animals they will enjoy – a tremendous variety – are native to the Appalachians and Blue Ridge. But the Parkway also faces issues, as do all National Parks, of many nonnative species that threaten native vegetation. But here on the Blue Ridge Parkway, one of the most ecologically diverse areas in world, the problem is magnified by its length and shape of the park. Resource managers and other park staff must work extra hard to keep the natural and native plants and animals of the Blue Ridge thriving.

The introduction of such non-native species is usually unintentional and is often the result of travel, immigration, or even global commerce. The wood used in packing crates has been the source of introduction of exotic insects. Produce, seeds, or nursery stock have been the culprits for introducing exotics as well. Automobiles and bicycles can carry exotics as can camping equipment or hiking boots.

Once established in a new area, the species can spread with devastating results. Some exotics even thrive in their new habitat since the competition or natural enemies that once kept them in check are now absent. Without these controls, adaptation to the new region can lead to unmanageable population levels.

Preserving natural resources along a 469-mile ribbon of land with 1,200 miles of boundary further complicates the issue of controlling or stopping invasive species. Because of its linear character, the Blue Ridge Parkway is more susceptible than most parks to invasion by exotic plants and animals from adjacent lands.

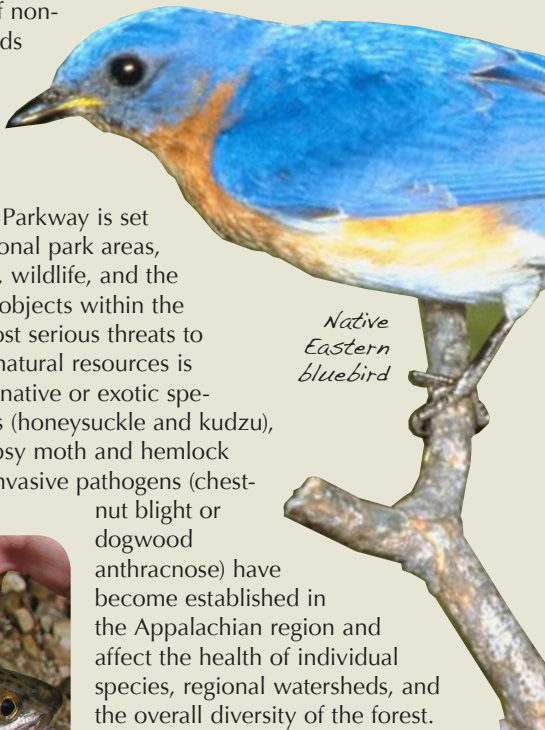
"Disturbance" areas or habitats tend to enhance the growth of invasive species. The Blue Ridge Parkway has thousands of "cut and fill" slopes, more than 3,000 vista openings and more than 1,000 utility and roadway crossings, all of which offer opportunities for pioneer or exotic plant species to grow. Control of this problem is a long-term commitment since non-natives are prolific seed producers and often become well established in an area within one or two years.

Several non-native animals can also pose problems to the native species of the southern mountains. Eastern blue-bird populations dropped significantly as the more aggressive European starlings took over available nesting cavities. Introduced brown and rainbow trout have displaced the native brook trout from many streams, forcing the native trout to move further and further upstream. The list of non-native species extends down to invertebrates, including earthworms and crayfish, and even fungi.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is set aside, as are all national park areas, to conserve scenery, wildlife, and the natural and historic objects within the park. One of the most serious threats to preservation of the natural resources is the invasion of non-native or exotic species. Invasive plants (honeysuckle and kudzu), invasive insects (gypsy moth and hemlock wooly adelgid), or invasive pathogens (chestnut blight or dogwood anthracnose) have become established in the Appalachian region and affect the health of individual species, regional watersheds, and the overall diversity of the forest.



Gypsy Moth Caterpillar



Native Eastern Bluebird



Linville River Brown Trout

More than Just a Road

PLANT POACHING



Galax leaves visibly tagged to prevent illegal harvesting

for physicians and pharmacists a century ago. It is little wonder that in our modern culture, herbal remedies have become popular for the treatment of many ailments ranging from the common cold to cancer.

The Blue Ridge Parkway, located in central and southern Appalachia, is world renown for its biological diversity. For this reason, the Parkway has become the focus of a growing problem with the illegal harvesting of plants (or “poaching”) that support the \$200 billion global natural products industry. This issue must be addressed in order for the Parkway habitats and ecosystems to be protected and thriving for the next 75 years.

Traditional use of many plants in the forest is part of the culture of the mountains, dating back to Native American populations before European settlement. Families gathered plants for personal consumption, as traditional herbal folk remedies, or as a cash crop. These kinds of activities have steadily declined in the region over the generations. Harvesting of plants today often involves organized violators who are “employed” as part of criminal conspiracies to supply legal markets with medicinal plants. Tens of thousands of plants or leaves taken from Parkway lands have been confiscated from harvesters on a number of occasions.

Poaching of plants has a direct impact on biological communities, the potential for research, and on the visitors’ enjoyment. In the wild, plants often grow in isolated patches that can be easily devastated by poachers. When a population is reduced to only a few individual plants or colonies, the genetic diversity is reduced. In addition, a species that has been heavily poached is at risk in its ability to survive disease. Poaching activity has been documented for decades, but recent investigation shows an increase in exploitation and a subsequent decrease in

Throughout recorded human history, plants have been valued for their medicinal qualities and today, about one quarter of all medicines come from derivatives or synthetic variations of plant compounds.

The study of botany and its medicinal derivatives was a standard part of the training

plant populations. Current levels of poaching could lead to complete loss of some plant species.

The three most commonly poached species on Parkway lands are galax, black cohosh, and ginseng.

Recently the Parkway initiated a program of tagging targeted plant species so that they can be easily traced back to their origin on park lands. The purpose of the program is to prevent the removal of illegally harvested plants so that rangers can spend more time on other visitor and resource protection activities. This tagging, through means visible and/or concealed, along with federal courts giving active jail time to offenders is leading to a decrease in plant poaching activities. Visitors witnessing illegal activities are asked to not confront the offenders but report the activity to the rangers through 1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928)

The tremendous biological diversity of the forests along the Blue Ridge Parkway offers a wide spectrum of other non-timber products as well from edible plants such as mushrooms and ramps, to plant nursery products or special woods prized for carving or in the making of musical instruments. Although limited quantities of berries, fruits, and nuts can be gathered for personal consumption on park lands (such gathering does not destroy the plant or hinder its reproduction), the role of the National Park Service is to protect the natural and historic objects of the park so that they will be available for the enjoyment of future generations.

The increased amount of illegal harvesting on park lands is an issue that is of increasing concern.



Ginseng



Ramps



AT ISSUE



How can you help?

Visitors witnessing illegal activities are asked to not confront the offenders but instead, report the activity to the rangers through 1-800-PARKWATCH (1-800-727-5928)

Finding The Best Of The Fall Colors



Fall is the season when the Blue Ridge attracts the most attention. Travelers, nature writers, photographers, and artists come to enjoy the visual display created by hardwood leaves changing from summer green to autumn gold, red, and orange. Visiting here in the peak of the

fall color season is a sight that few fail to appreciate. Finding the right “window” of time and the perfect spot can perhaps be nothing more than good fortune, but keeping a few things in mind and exercising some patience can increase anyone’s chances of seeing the Blue Ridge in its autumn glory. Typically, the Parkway experiences the much anticipated change in fall foliage around the middle of October. Some years the color comes a bit early and other years it may be delayed a week or so. Many factors contribute to variations in when and where colors will peak, with moisture throughout the year and the colder temperatures being key factors. The Parkway is 469 miles north to south and varies over 5,000 feet in elevation. The best plan for witnessing fall color is to drive some distance on the Parkway, changing elevations and north-south orientation. As is always the case with outdoor viewing, early morning or late afternoon light tends to bring contrasts of shadows that will brighten colors. Whether you come to the Blue Ridge with camera, palette and brush, or simply to take in the richness from an overlook, a little planning and patience in mid to late October will yield some of the pretty color that we’re famous for.

EXPERIENCING THE BLUE RIDGE:

In Community

Perhaps more than any other National Park area, the Blue Ridge Parkway is an integral part of the region through which it passes. In fact, for many visitors, this place serves as a “platform” to climb up on and look out... into valleys and distant mountain ranges, into rural landscapes, into our neighbors’ back yards, and into local communities. These are places far beyond the physical boundaries of the park. But these communities and interesting regional crossroads are as much a part of a Blue Ridge Parkway experience as the drive itself. The Parkway is vitally important to many of these communities and the character and nature of these communities is vitally important to your Parkway experience as well. Many of these places are having their own Parkway 75th anniversary celebrations this year. This most visited of all National Park areas cannot stay the way visitors have known it to be for decades without community and regional help, and the communities of the region will not stay the way they are, charming and unique, without a well maintained, cared for, protected Parkway corridor. So don’t forget, while you’re enjoying the drive, to stop and browse the well known areas like the regions around Roanoke, Boone and Blowing Rock, and Asheville... or perhaps the smaller, out of the way spots that seem attractive to you.



Parkway Partners

Perhaps one of these groups has a place for you to help!

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY ASSOCIATION – For 60 years this association of chambers of commerce and travel businesses has provided information about accommodations and visitor services along the entire Parkway corridor, including this Directory & Travel Planner. This publication is distributed free at Parkway visitor centers and contains the most extensive listing of hotels and attractions in the region. www.blueridgeparkway.org.

THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY FOUNDATION – Founded in 1997, this non-profit foundation is the primary fundraising organization for the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Foundation solicits donations and bequests from individuals, as well as grants and corporate support for a broad range of programs and activities that provide lasting benefits to the Parkway and its visitors. www.brpfoundation.org.

EASTERN NATIONAL – This nonprofit educational organization helps to staff visitor centers, providing information and selling books and other items that help you enjoy the Parkway and our Southern Appalachian region. Profits from these sales are returned to the park to support educational programs and research. www.easternnational.org.

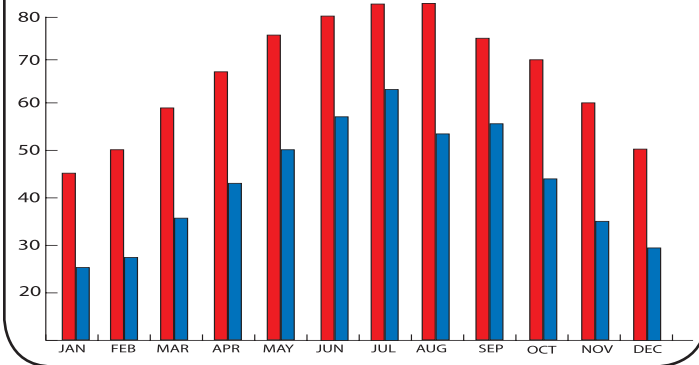
FRIENDS OF THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY – FRIENDS is a non-profit membership organization founded in 1988. They provide major support to the park's Volunteers in Parks program, the first Friends group to do so nationally by mobilizing and providing leadership for volunteers who assist with a wide variety of Parkway projects. www.blueridgefriends.org.

Normal Daily Maximum & Minimum Temperatures

Average Elevation of 2100'

For weather info call (828) 298-0398.

Parts of the Parkway may close to vehicles due to weather. For updated information, call (828) 298-0398 for list of closings. Always be prepared for rapidly changing weather and the difference that elevation change can make in temperature



World-famous scenery and outstanding opportunities for camping, hiking, and other recreational activities have made the Blue Ridge Parkway the most visited unit of America's National Park System. Funding has not always kept pace with increasing visitation, aging infrastructure, and the need to work with local communities on protection of adjacent land. Many people care deeply about the Parkway and its future. Through a variety of organizations, they are joining hands to protect and preserve this very special place and, beyond that, to enhance the quality of the park experience that so many visitors enjoy.

LAND & CONSERVATION TRUSTS – the Western Virginia Land Trust www.westernvirginialandtrust.org, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina www.ctnc.org, and Blue Ridge Forever www.blueridgeforever.info work to protect lands adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway. These groups serve a vital mission in preserving open space in local communities as well.

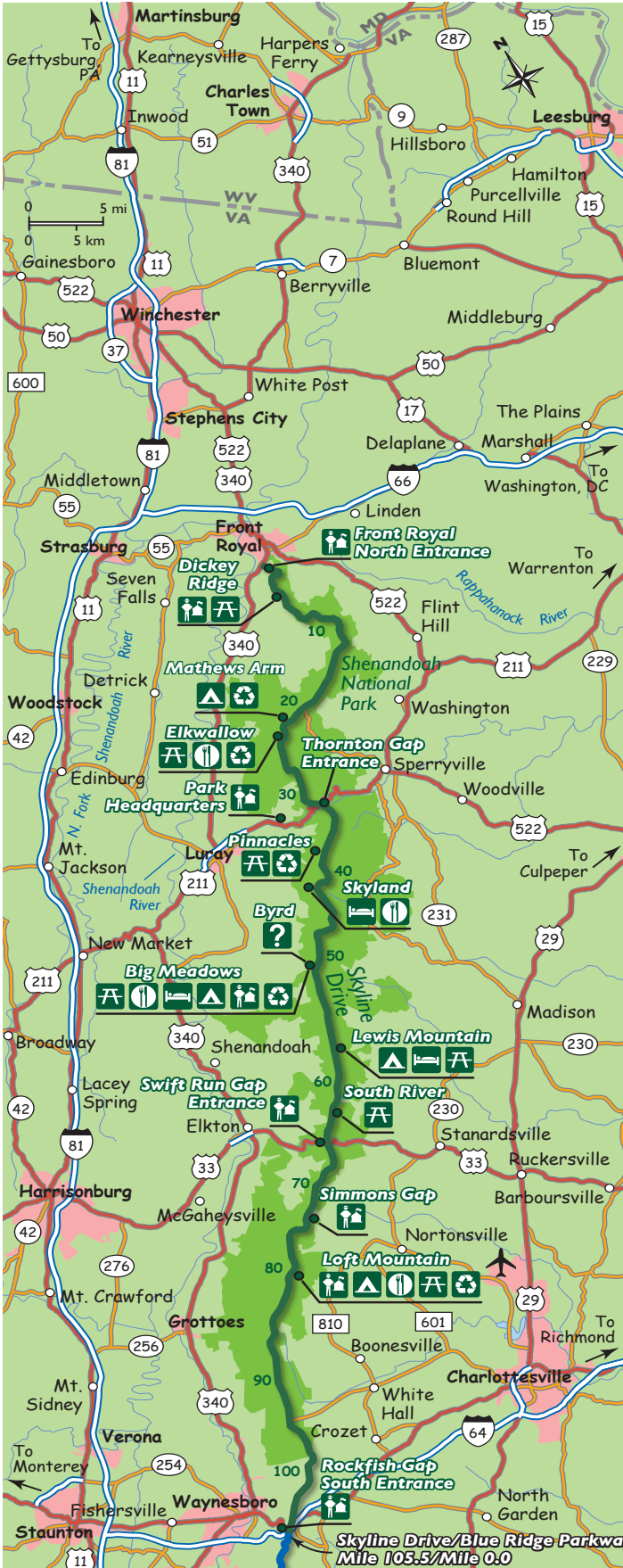
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE TRADITIONAL ARTS – For nearly 70 years, NCTA has produced and supported a variety of traditional arts programs in national park areas across the United States. By formal agreement with the Parkway, NCTA supports the Blue Ridge Music Center at Milepost 213 near Galax, VA by providing a summer concert series and working toward permanent museum exhibits that chronicle the history of our region's musical heritage. www.ncta.net.

BLUE RIDGE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA - Established by Congress in November, 2003, this organization promotes the natural abundance and richly varied cultural history of the North Carolina mountains and is charged with the preservation, interpretation, and development of heritage resources in the state's 25 westernmost counties and the Quallah Boundary. www.blueridgeheritage.com

SOUTHERN HIGHLAND CRAFT GUILD – The Blue Ridge Parkway's Folk Art Center at Milepost 382 in Asheville and the Parkway Craft Center at the Moses Cone Memorial Park at Milepost 294 in Blowing Rock are home to the Southern Highland Craft Guild. Free programs, includes regional and national exhibitions of contemporary and traditional crafts, helping the Parkway promote regional cultural heritage. www.southernhighlandguild.org.

Of Special Note

While the Parkway is closed to commercial traffic, tour bus/motor coach touring is permitted, and no permit is required. Motorcycles and RVs are also welcome. In fact, the Parkway is a premier destination for both. Beware, some curves can be tricky for motorcyclists and caution is advisable over daring. RVers should note that campgrounds do not offer hook-ups, but potable water and dump stations are provided. All offer at least some sites that will accommodate larger RVs. Most tunnels provide plenty of clearance, although several near Cherokee have a minimum height of less than 11 feet at the road's edge and drivers of especially tall vehicles should favor the centerline!



1

Harpers Ferry through Shenandoah National Park to Blue Ridge Parkway Milepost 0

Blue Ridge Parkway

Virginia and North Carolina

The Blue Ridge Parkway is the very scenic highway that connects Shenandoah National Park and the Skyline Drive in Virginia, with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee. The whole trip along the Parkway, which traverses Virginia and western North Carolina, encompasses a 469 mile drive that can take up to a leisurely 10 days, including stops to explore along the way.

It's a highway and a journey surrounded by natural beauty. The majority of the Parkway in Virginia runs through the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests and into North Carolina along mountain crests. The road itself is a two lane highway with a 45 mph speed limit, but for travelers who enjoy "driving trips," traveling the Parkway can be a very special experience.

The attractions along the Virginia portion of the Parkway differ slightly from those on the North Carolina side. In Virginia, the recreated mountain farm near Humpback Rocks at the beginning of the Parkway and Mabry Mill, further south, give visitors a glimpse of traditional mountain life in the early days of settlement. In North Carolina, Linville Falls, the Cradle of Forestry, and other natural wonders, feature the natural environment. In addition to the stops right along the Parkway itself, the road is next to historic towns from top to bottom, making for fascinating exploration of the heritage and culture of the region along the way. The headquarters of the Blue Ridge Parkway is located in Asheville, North Carolina, a city well known to literary figures including Carl Sandburg, Thomas Wolfe and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Exploration of their homes and haunts in the Asheville area presents an interesting side trip and a one or two day break from driving.

MAP KEY:

explanatory table of symbols used on Parkway maps

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| PICNIC AREA | RECYCLE AREA |
| RANGER STATION | LODGING |
| TENT AREA | INFORMATION |
| FOOD | AIRPORT |